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Author

Title

Imprint



S P E E C H

OF

HON. LAWRENCE M. KEITT,  
OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

ON

THE ORIGIN OF SLAVERY;

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 24, 1858.



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## SPEECH.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. KEITT said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On a past occasion I made an endeavor, and did not, I trust, entirely fail, to prove that, with the diffusion of the human race upon earth, in the customs of savage hordes and the legislation of early nations—at the origins of human societies and under the precepts of God, directly revealed to his people, slavery, domestic slavery, stood as a constant, primitive, and universal fact, before which the speculations of schools, the reluctance of prejudice, or the whine of hypocrisy are compelled to sink into either silence or acknowledgment. I have appealed to the earliest traditions of mankind; I have gone under the tent of the patriarch, when he spoke face to face “with the Lord out of Heaven,” and received the promises of the first covenant; I have entered the precinct of the household which contained the father of the family and the master of the bondman merged in one and the same person; I have questioned the usages of nomadic tribes and the legislation of civilized States—nay, I have interrogated the sanctioner of all earthly legislation; I have, not irreverently, interrogated the law of God himself, and each and all of them have armed my postulate with defiant proof that slavery, far from being the work of violence and of wrong, is alike ratified by Divine wisdom and demanded by social requirements.

This, I repeat it, the traditional voices of mankind; the usages of the patriarchal days; the cycles of popular poetry; the enactments of man; and the higher sanctions of the law of God—all of them amply, unerringly, and irreversibly converge to establish.

It does not belong to me, sir, to inquire how those who have foregone the manlier attitude of the antagonist to skulk under the more congenial infamies of the traducer, can ever succeed in scaling this battlement of proof. For my part, aside from all human authority and legal defense, I am content impregnably to intrench the rights

of the South behind the muniments which the hand of the Almighty has reared; or, if for greater security, to plant them upon the summit of the mount where the law was proclaimed; where, with the proclamation of the law was also uttered the fiat which sanctioned slavery and settled the relations between the master and the slave. And here, sir, I cannot, in this connection, omit reference to a fact which struck me with peculiar force, in the sequel of my inquiries. It is a strange thing, yet no less true than strange, that in this consecration of the Divine will, the commandments themselves, given in the voice of the thunder and the flash of the lightning; those commandments which recognized and confirmed the previously existing rights (Exodus, chapter xx., verses 10–17) should, without any interposition of other matter, be immediately followed by precepts settling and regulating the character and status of slavery. (Exodus, chapter xxi., verses 2, 4, 6, 7, 20, 26, 27, 32.) Yes, turn to that Book, which, in all the things of human life, is one of perpetual relevancy, because it is the Book of eternal wisdom and truth, and any thinking and honest man must also be struck with this peculiarity in this question of slavery, which the Almighty, in his decrees, has seen fit to consecrate; but which some of his miserable, presumptuous creatures, in their superior wisdom and holier claims, would damn into an abomination and a sin. As in our organic law its creators, after the declaration of the objects and principles of government, gave the most prominent place to the duties and inhibitions—marked in a specific form for the framers, the expounders, and the executives of the supreme law; so in the Divine constitution, after the declaration of the moral law and the requirements of the Divine worship, out of the multiplicity of precepts which he had to impose, and which he did impose upon his people, God seems specially to have selected this question of slavery to make it the subject of a particular determination of duties and delegation of powers, enjoined and conferred on Moses, the organ and exponent of His law.



That law, Mr. Chairman, endured in its fullness, as the expressed will of the Maker, until it pleased him again to reveal that will to His creatures and to send His Messiah as the witness of that revelation. It remained in vigor, unmodified and unchanged, save in the necessities of the new scheme, among which slavery was not reckoned, by Him who emphatically declared: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" the law, which He committed to His ministers in their prosecution of His divine mission. By them it was transmitted to their successors, and by these, in an unbroken line, to the succeeding agents who continued that work. And thus, sir, down the steep of ages, until our days of new lights and modern improvements, when it is sought to substitute a sickly philanthropy for the salutary precepts of the Creator—our days of fanatical innovation and dissolving doctrines, in which the voice of the Romillies, the Wilberforces, and the Clarksons, denouncing the law of God, found an echo in our own second-handed Abolition conferences, in our modest revisers of the olden creed, and northern editors of a new code of Christianity. From negation to negation they have gone on repudiating the traditions of the original code; repudiating the customs of the past which it sanctioned; repudiating the formal instructions of the earliest apostles; repudiating, when they did not actually criminate, the silence of the Savior himself; they have gone on thus, until, in one crowning act of impious insolence, howling for "an anti-slavery Bible and an anti-slavery God," they have repudiated the written law of the divine Legislator, and *ex cathedra* declared His own institution and consecration of slavery to be a defilement and a crime. If we, sir, who claim a two-fold guarantee for the rights of the slaveholder, in the legal sanction and the divine injunctions, which I take to be the very duramen of the institution and its growth, are tainted by such defilement and guilty of such crime; if these men, instead of being impious maniacs and malicious slanderers, are the assertors of truth and the vindicators of right; then shall we have to reverse the injunctions of the apostles delivered in the prosecution of their ministry and baptized in the holy spirit of knowledge and truth; shall have to load our souls with the guilt of the blasphemer and condemn the Savior for His silence on this question of slavery, or interpolate His teachings dispensed to those apostles as the muniments of their approaching ministry. Then, sir, shall we be compelled to rend asunder the slavery record of Exodus, extending over the chapters of Leviticus, and reaffirmed in the second promulgation of the law through the precepts of Deuteronomy. Compelled, sir, if these men are to escape the stigma which should attach to them as willful falsifiers of the word of God, to pervert every line of Scripture, and blot out the decalogue itself; which, embodying the sum of our moral duties and religious obligations, embodies also a recognition of slavery.

But we of the South, with no claim to self-sustaining godliness, and with no impudent pretensions to reform or amend the word of God, must be content to abide by its precepts, and cling to

its securities. We cannot, therefore, consent that it shall be so lacerated as to pluck away from its prohibitions, not a denunciation of slavery, but that command which should forbid men "to bear false witness against their neighbor." Hence, sir, respecting that law, in all its bearings, we respect it in its bearing upon slavery, where its recognition by man is corroborated by the sanction of Heaven. It has the authority of covenant and time for its applications in human societies. It has the authority of apostolic instructions, and of Christian practice. It has the authority of the canons and decretals of the Church, when there was but *one* Church on the face of the earth. It has the authority of imperial rescripts and royal decrees, not condemned by the spiritual dicta of the Church. It has the authority of parliamentary statutes, of colonial regulations and State laws, which recognize its concordance and fitness with slavery. Slavery, sir, under that law, has claimed and obtained the assent of universal custom and right; and we contend that a *disinterested* renunciation, or *pious* non-user of a right, on the part of any individual, community, or State, can never disparage the authority of that law, affect the sanctity of our rights, or pervert their exercise into an imputation of wrong. No, sir; we cannot allow those men, unmasked and unrebuked, to mutilate the record for purposes of malice, of falsehood, and of strife. The municipal law of modern times is but the binomial affirmation of the Divine law of ancient days; and upon both we stand, and shall ever stand, as a tower of impregnable strength.

Painfully aware am I, Mr. Chairman, that this is not the place where the question of slavery, in this view—I mean in the religious view—should be discussed. But when the assault is not confined to the declarations of conferences, and the decrees of synods; to the rabid vituperations of the rostra, and the scurrilous amenities of the pulpit; when the trained and prompted retailers of secular slanders and holy falsehoods come here, where all meet upon an equality of political rights, whatever distinction may be marked by a sense of personal dignity, and the despotism of gentlemanly nurture—come here, and upon this floor, "like hounds let loose from leash," day after day howl in our ears that we are "men stealers;" that we are breakers of the Divine law; that slavery has the curse of God upon its head; and that our maintenance of the system is a sin in His eyes; we may be pardoned for overlooking the proprieties of place, and even "wer't in a church," not refrain from repelling the assault where it is made, and the falsehood where advanced. Why, sir, even those who profess to stand by our rights modify the admission by the salvo that slavery, though a shocking thing, is our own business and concern. They justify their gingerly advocacy of what they call the rights of slavery, as existing *in the States*, by the complimentary avowal that "our people are not their people, and our God their God." That our people and our God are not their people and their God, we have abundant and satisfactory proof. The burning sense of wrong that kindles the southern heart; every pulse which, in the southern bosom, beats in an-

swer to the voice of justice, tells us that our people cannot be their people. That their God is not, and cannot be our God; we have the evidence in their persistent repudiation of His law, and their willful perversion of its precepts.

For the delicate allotment in the former case, of the *suum cuique*, Mr. Chairman, and the proper discrimination between our people and theirs, they have the due acknowledgments of one, at least, who would regret to find misconception or confusion existing on that score. For the duality of the godship, in the latter instance, I am not otherwise prepared, nor is it quite my province to account. I am, however, reminded of the congratulations of the Roman poet:

"O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur, in hortis  
Numina"—

congratulations addressed to "that holy race whose gods in gardens grow;" whilst mine may not be withheld from the people, not ours, whose inventive genius, among others of its achievements, has secured for them a patent northern god, in a Yankee heaven. I am satisfied, sir, to give wide berth to this horrid idol of northern contrivance—horrid indeed, sir, if we are to judge of its character by the madness and impiety to which its baleful spirit is driving its fanatical worshippers. I give it wide berth to cling to the God whom we acknowledge in reverence and truth—the God of our fathers, who has smiled, and who continues to smile, in kindness and protection, upon both master and slave; the God of our fathers in the trial times of our struggle, whose light they invoked in the deliberations of the council-room, and to whose might they appealed in the arbitrament of the battle-field: the God who breathed wisdom in their councils, and gave power to their arms; the God who, in the day of ordeal, with the scales of justice in His hand, swayed the beam on the side of victory and right. This, sir, is our God—the God whose paths we have striven to pursue, and whose mandates we have labored to obey. This God, the very brotherly spirit of our northern friends has differenced from theirs.

In the prosecution of this duty to the South, and in vindication of its traduced and slandered people, to Him and to His law, its permission and its guarantees, I confidently appeal to shake off the responsibility which the repeated assertion that slavery is a sin, because it is an assumed violation of the justice of God, seeks to impute to us as breakers of the Christian law in the maintenance of the institution in our political and domestic society. Why, sir, the news current upon your streets but yesterday tells you that a religious conference—a religious conference!—at the North, following scores of other conferences of the kind, by a vote of fifty-one against thirty-five, passed resolutions—affirmed resolutions, decreeing us and our people of the South to be violators of the law of God, and of the teachings of His Son. The duties of the headsman, performed on some of the more distinguished felons, were wont, in times past, to borrow a relative dignity from the character of the criminals. But the office of an executioner, discharged even on these saintly culprits

of ours, can be but loathsome at best. Hence, sir, I shrink from branding these pious perverters of truth with the stigma due to the falsehoods which they, with fiendish malice and unstinted breath, daily drivel against the institutions, the morals, and the religion of the South. Were it not for the obligation incumbent on this discussion to pluck the mask from the face of error, and to champion the sanctities of truth, I would scarcely waste the breath to ask them to point out to us where Christ taught, where Christ hinted, that slavery, as He found it established by the will of His Father, uttered on the heights of Sinai—that slavery, as He found it under the derivative authority of human legislation, is a violation and a breaking of His Divine precepts? Humbly and reverently, sir, have I scanned those precepts; not to falsify, not to warp, but to understand and respect; and nowhere yet have I been able to find a line that will either screen our slanderers from the guilt of willful obliquity from the paths, which, in this respect, He has marked for our feet, or subject us to the charge of a departure from His intents in the same respect. It is our sincere acknowledgment, on the contrary, that His teachings, without conceit of ourselves, or disparagement of others, are a guide to our lives, and a sacrament to our hopes; and we keep them guarded and free from the thousand worldly stains by which, through their prostitution of religion to political and secular ends, our traducers blur the holiness and deform the beauty of His worship, in persistent contempt of His admonition: "My kingdom is not of this world."

Much as the fact may exercise the incredulity of our northern friends—credulous in all else that promises full scope for the pursuit of serious follies and fanatical aims—I assert this, in the name of a high-thoughted and generous people, whose only guilt is blindness to the refined civilization, and rebellion against the self-seeking morality of a self-righteous North. I do it in the name and on behalf of the mothers of the South, before the moral splendors of whose home-virtues and exemplary lives the fame of the Roman matrons dwindles into an empty boast. I assert it in the name and on behalf of the daughters of the South, who, rich in every endowment that adorns the female character, give assurance that this patrimony of quiet and purifying virtues shall long continue unflawed by the rude contact of the public rostrum, or unshamed by dabbings in the vagaries of woman's rights. I assert it in the name of the younger sons of the South, the *spes altera Romæ*, the future hope of our Republic, held to the memory of lofty deeds, and sworn to patriotic service. But, especially do I assert it in the name and in vindication of a pure and enlightened clergy, who sustain high purposes with high dignity, and justify their ministry by the teachings which their Master taught.

When, therefore, Mr. Chairman, the attempt is made, in the name of religion, to put our moral and social character under the ban of the world's opinion; when made by the arm of fanaticism, led by falsehood, to assail the institutions and endanger the peace of the South; it is neither out of place, nor against propriety, for us to go even to



the armories of Christianity for a weapon of defense. I trust, sir, that the same spirit of fairness which sustained my reference to the primitive sources of unerring wisdom and truth, and guided the investigation into the other sources of authority, will not fail me in further inquiries directed to the record of the gospel, which time has handed down to us as the voucher of the doctrines of Christ.

On his advent, sir, slavery was a universal fact, growing out of the rights laid down in the original law, and acknowledged by every tribe and nation, whether now lost in the darkness of ages, or once figuring in the geographies of the inhabited earth. Neither He, as the promulgator of the suppletory law, nor His Apostles, as its subsequent heralds, ever denied the law in that particular, or preached in condemnation of either the right or the fact. The founder of the new code taught the unity of God in a trinity of persons. He taught the fall of man and the regeneration through His merits. He enforced the necessities of meekness, justice, temperance, and charity. He rebuked the pride of human will and of human intellect, and sustained all orders of men by the doctrine that the highest of the spiritual virtues can be linked with a lowly estate, a chastened will, and a trusting faith. From the summit of that mount, to which every sincere Christian looks for the law of his duty, He, in minutest details, uttered all the offices of those who claim to be the followers of His gospel; but in nothing, save the redemption of marriage from the bond of the Mosaic law, and in its consecration under a holier form, did he enjoin any innovation in the social scheme. He provided ample means for the emancipation of His creatures from the spiritual bondage; but nowhere did He proclaim the abolition of legal or domestic slavery. He drew closer the family tie—stripped the husband of much of his irresponsible authority, and raised woman up in the scale of social influence. He inculcated good works on all—each in his degree, and enjoined purity of life and respect for the paternal authority and the conjugal bond. This, and more, He has left to us as memorials of a mission still spreading through the civilized and uncivilized world. But I ask to be pointed to the record, where He gave one word of mandate, where He uttered one syllable of reprobation regarding the relations of master and slave; relations recognized by the Government under which His gospel and its precepts were dispensed. It is, on the contrary, a singular and noteworthy fact that He universally abstained from any reproving allusion to them. He talked to the doctors and of the doctors, never loath to wrest the law to their own purposes, whether clad in the "Jewish gabardine," or the New England cloak. He talked to Pharisees, and of the Pharisees, whose self-righteousness has lost no presumption by grafting on the Puritan stock. He talked to hypocrites, and of hypocrites, whose unbroken lineage has run through time, and conquered space from the shores of Genesareth to the base of Plymouth rock. But I call for the allegation of a single instance, when, in the midst of Galilee, a conquered Jewish province, ruled by

a Roman procurator, with slavery existing under the Mosaic law, and slavery existing under the heathen law, He once spoke to slaves or against slavery. I find, on the other hand, that, on His entrance into Capernaum, He heals the slave of the centurion, and has no rebuke for slavery, but praises for the officer's faith.\*

No, sir, nothing of condemnation, nothing of even reproof from the Savior's lips, for the "vile wretch,"—the "man stealer;" who, according to the approved Yankee formula, "held his brother man in bondage." If ever, Mr. Chairman, an opportunity was offered to stamp with reprobation this lately devised curse and ungodliness of slavery, surely this healing of the centurion's slave held out that most golden opportunity. Had one of our pious go-betweens—one of our religious brokers here upon earth—but stood next to the Savior, and found the chance of whispering his puritanic suggestion, well might He have said to the Roman officer: "You profess that this slave is 'endeared to you,' and yet you keep him in bondage against my Father's law and mine. You have appealed to the power which He gave to me to raise him up from his bed of palsy, and I have raised him up without money and without price; will you not alike evince your acknowledgment of my ministry, and your affection for your slave, and restore him to that freedom, of which you deprive him, in defiance of nature, of man, and of God?" No, sir; wrapped in His own imperscrutable knowledge of all things—unaided even by the lights of our modern improvers—not a word of rebuke, not one of remonstrance, passes His divine lips; but instead, come the words of eulogy, that set up the soldier as a pattern for Israel, whilst the right of the master and the protection of the slave are sanctioned in the faith of the believer. It is vain for these godly expounders of ours to speculate upon ignorance, or rely on fanaticism to distort the teachings of Christ to the support of their interested, malicious, and selfish crusade against an institution devised by the will of God, and accepted by the law of man. In the words of the Prætor, sir, *non ita scriptum legis carmen*—this is not the sacramental language of either the divine law, or of Him who expounded its precepts. In the multitude of subjects upon which He discoursed with His disciples, you find no mention of slavery; in matters upon which He gave them instructions and charge, never did He breath the name of slave except in the frequent use which He makes of the relations between master and slave to illustrate those between God and his creatures.

I therefore challenge our detractors to point out to us where He condemned slavery, or denounced the master who owned the slave. In

\* Once, for all, the fact is mentioned that, in Greek, *ανδράποdon* is a slave by captivity in war; *δουλος*, a slave by birth; *θεράπων*, a servant, a Yankee "help;" *οικετης*, a domestic, whether menial or servile; and lastly *μισθωτός*, one that serves for wages or pay. The word "servant," as a version of *δουλος*, in King James's translation, is a refinement of language; for *δουλος* means "slave," and nothing but slave, so born.



what passage of His conferences with his disciples? In what line of His preachings to the multitudes? In what word of His mandates to His Apostles, and in what last injunction, when He laid in their hands the destinies, not only of the world, but the destinies of the hereafter also of that world? On the contrary, sir, you find Him recognizing all the obligations of the social scheme in the midst of which He lived and moved; and teaching all of them, down to the payment of tribute to Cæsar, recurring even to His power of miracle to provide the means of its payment. He recognizes all the subordinations of political life, and among these he specially recognizes the subjection of the slave to the master, when, warning His followers of the duty of faith in Him, He expressly enforces His admonition by the dictum that "the disciple is not above his teacher, nor the slave (it is *δoulos* in the original text) above his master." In his foresight of the influence of His mission on all the relations of heathen life, He tells His disciples that He has come to set the father against the son, the daughter against the mother, the friend against the friend. But I nowhere find that He told them that he had come to overthrow the standing order of things, that He had come to stir the untutored passions of the slave, to break the tie that bound him to his master, and to set him up against his lawful authority. In that divine foresight of the dissensions which the adoption of His creed by some, and its rejection by others, would introduce in the family and the State, He told his disciples He had come to bring, not peace but the sword. But, sir, I am yet to find that He ever commended that sword to the hand of the slave, with the invitation—nay, with the injunction—to sheath it in the master's throat. If there be a record of it, it must be in some precepts of the "anti-slavery God," and written down in some edition of the "anti-slavery Bible," which northern fanatics have created for their rule of faith. To the chapters of that Bible of intrusive, meddlesome, and ever dissatisfied contrivers of *isms*, was reserved the high privilege of correcting the laches of the Savior, and of putting, in His holy name, the torch and the knife in the hands of our slaves—pointing the former to our roofs, and the latter to our throats.

Well, sir, if the Savior did not reprove, nay, did not even mention legal or domestic slavery; if He left no instructions and no charge to His disciples touching either its abolition or its sinfulness, let us see whether those disciples did not, upon the organization of the visible Church, and its entwining with the offices of a new form of society, either from their own authority, or from that of their Master, denounce the institution. Open the book of eternal truth, and you will find that in His teachings He never went beyond the race of Abraham.

To them the promise had been made, and to them He came in its fulfillment. When, therefore, He had revealed himself in the form of humanity; when He had forced upon them the testimony of His mission, and of His power, by a concordance with prophecy, and by His working of

miracles; when, in the prospect of His death, which He knew to be impending, He gave the last of His charges to His immediate followers; among them was the injunction to preach the Gospel to all the nations of the earth. In the discharge of their duty, that Gospel they did preach, and preached it as its precepts had been orally delivered to them. If, then, in His mandates He had enjoined them against slavery, or if, by virtue of some grant of power not recorded, and which might have been made to them, they had found anything contrary to His instructions and His charge, in the fact and usage of slavery, unquestionably would they have recorded the fact in His gospel of truth; unquestionably would they have raised their voice against the continuance of the institution, though they knew God Himself to have been its founder; and, warning a slave not to obey a master who had neither religious nor legal right over him, unquestionably would they have rebuked, or rather condemned the master, not merely for claiming obedience, but for holding his "brother man" in that condition which demanded subservience. Now, sir, we find nothing of the kind. As their Master had abstained in the case of the centurion, so they abstained in the general fact of relation between master and slave. Against this no contrivance of malice and no refinement of sophistry can avail. The Savior taught for a period of nearly three years, and of these teachings He left no record written by Himself. The task of embodying them in what we now know as the canon of the New Testament, devolved upon His ministers. As they received, so must they have handed down to us. But, sir, nowhere will you find slavery mentioned by them as an abomination and a sin. They have not so handed it down to us; they therefore did not thus receive it from the Savior's lips. But if not thus laid down, either from the oral declarations of the Savior or the written record of His words, slavery cannot, therefore, without perversion, be called an abomination and a sin. And yet we are seriously told, within the last three weeks we have heard it sanctimoniously repeated, that slavery is a damning sin against the Divine law; a hot-bed of corruption, tainting everything within its atmosphere; everything, even to the most sacred relations of the domestic circle. Whence, would I ask, do those kind men of the North, who are not touched by the blight or cursed by the sin of slavery, derive their peculiar contributions to the stock of morality? From what quarter of this Confederacy, under what state of morals, come those daily and hourly revelations of crime which appal the country, and blur its history with the darkest record of social corruption and social guilt? Why, sir, from the pure, saintly, and immaculate regions of the land not tainted by this abomination of slavery! There the most complicated theory of crime finds the meet representative, often the ready agent to carry it into practice; and this not in the *sentina Reipublicæ*; not in the drains and sewers which bubble with immorality and vice, but in the high places of society, where the corruption and the vice—not begotten by our curse of slavery, nor induced by the influence of its blight—

move and live unpunished and unchecked. It were barely doing justice to the better claims of our section to institute comparison between the morality of the South and North. The very slaves whom they hold up to us as reacting causes of corruption, in retribution of the condition in which the law of man and of God has placed them, might well challenge comparison with any laboring class, nor shrink from their standard, whether in the moral or religious scale.

The old law, sir, admitted the slave to a participation in the rites of the Jewish temple, but it did not relieve him from the obligation of bondage which it had itself imposed. Our usage, accepting the law that institutes the slave, allows him to benefit by all the dispensations of the Christian Church. The initiatory rite which was administered to him in the peculiar form of the Jewish creed, is now administered to him in the waters of baptism, which is the Christian substitute for the Hebrew "sign." The partaking by him of the ordinance of the Passover, which was the great Jewish remembrancer, is among us extended to him in the Christian communion which supplanted the Jewish type. In one word, and for all that our systematic traducers may utter in falsehood, the marriage rite is free to the race, wherever their inclination or choice may tend. Indeed, sir, I do not know, that, even among our blacks, the bond is not held in greater sacredness than it has of late seemed to be among their betters at the North; for, unless I greatly err, the dockets of more than one free State bear witness to the zeal with which some, at least, of our white reverend friends practically comment the precept, "Whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder." My high regard for the virtues of the sex forbids the supposition that the wives of our meek and charitable parsons can justify applications to courts of justice for human decrees to reverse the Divine injunction, and make twain what marriage has made "one flesh." I am compelled, therefore, to think that, useful as these reverend lords may be to foster domestic agitation and kindle civil feuds, they would be but sorry, if not dangerous exemplars, in this respect, for the morality of our black preachers, for such we have among us, who are not yet trained to dexterous evasions of the moral precepts.

But, sir, re-creation is not within the scope of my remarks; and I resume my vindication of the fact and right of slavery on purely religious grounds, and under purely religious authority. I have laid down, sir, that neither from the declarations of the Master, nor from the teachings of the apostles, can slavery, without perversion of both, be called an abomination and a sin. That it is not an abomination is an inconcussible fact, because it was instituted by the Almighty Himself, and the institution has remained unrepealed; that it is not a sin is equally unshaken, because it has been sanctioned by the silence of the Savior, and recognized by His apostles, speaking in His name. I find them in their own record of their acts holding a first council of the Church; I see them, by virtue of the power received from their Head, engaged in debates, and making decis-

ions in matters of faith; I see them, among other acts, after solemn deliberations, repudiating the tenth verse of the seventeenth chapter of Genesis; and this, on essential grounds, because the baptism of water was one of those perfections of the law substituted for the baptism of blood. But in that council, in those acts, I see no reversal, no mention even, of the forty-sixth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus, which, in the words of God, and with the sanction of His will, makes slavery "a perpetual inheritance" by the precept of a law which the Messiah came to fulfill, not destroy. I go further, and I find that, of the apostles, some, in the discharge of their ministry, confined it to their immediate neighborhood, whilst others traveled into remoter lands in prosecution of their missionary task. Among the latter, Paul was the most zealous and active. Bearing the word to the inhabitants of many provinces, in various countries, he had found them pagans, and he left them Christians in practice and faith. Deeply versed in the law of the covenant, divinely inspired with the spirit of the gospel, not unacquainted with the precepts of the code, he had occasion, in his missions, to approach and decide many of the most intricate questions growing out of the doctrines of the new creed, and the institutes of political society. The conditions of Christianity, embraced by a wife and repudiated by a husband, adopted by a mother and refused by the children, preached to a slave and rejected by the master, suggested new ideas, and startled many scruples in many a mind.

Hence, sir, we find that after he had left them, to pass on to other theaters of action, he is frequently appealed to on some of the most delicate of domestic questions—among them, this very one of slavery—arising between individuals, who, bound together by the civil law of the land, were severed by religious differences of faith. Well, sir, what lesson does his example supply to the innovators of our holier days? In all cases, with the clearness and precision, which, had he not been an inspired agent, would have marked him as one of the proudest of human intellects, he explains and resolves; he exhorts and enjoins; he permits and forbids. But in no instance on the question of slavery, does he utter one reproofing word. As his Master had neither condemned nor rebuked, so he abstains from condemnation and rebuke. As his Master had not disclaimed, so he does not breathe a word against Jewish slavery, consecrated by the law of God; not a word against pagan slavery, sanctioned by the law of the Code. The doctrine of the Code, sir, on a past occasion, I fully, and I trust unanswerably, explained. The doctrine of the Gospel, as delivered by the Savior, on this subject, I think that I have as fully and as unanswerably explained. But, besides the embodiments of precepts in the Gospel, the apostles have left us, in the shape of acts, a record of their ministerial functions, and under the form of epistles, a transcript of their pastoral instructions to the flocks which they had gathered in the various provinces of earth. In those instructions is embraced every variety of questions, social and domestic, which could arise in political societies,



infinitely less ramified and complicated than are our systems of polity. To these instructions, therefore, I now proceed to appeal. A reference to the first apostolic council, consigned in the history of the Acts, shows that though various questions of political life had been touched upon, that of slavery did not enter into debate. For such a discussion, sir, the time had, no doubt, not yet come. But it did come, and come teeming with inquiries suggested by the conscience, or urged by the faith of the new converts. Among those was this mysterious question of slavery, the solution of which baffles the most subtle ingenuities of man, for the very reason, perchance, that it is not of his creation and his establishment.

Well, sir, the question came up, and what does the record show? Why, they go to the record of that *word* which shall not pass away; they scrutinize the rights which it allows; the duties which it prescribes; the obligations which it imposes, and instantly the question is settled in the mind of the Apostle, and the adjustment is uttered, under the spirit of the Divine Master himself. "Servants, (*δουλοι*, slaves,) be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God." (Ephesians, chap. vi., verse 5.) And here, sir, will you notice that the inducement, nay, the reason for the obedience of the slave, is, that it is "doing the will of God?" How else could it be, sir? How else, that the Divine spirit should breathe the words of Divine truth? Had not the will of God been expressed in the original law? Had not that original law established and regulated the conditions of slavery? Had not those conditions been carried out and maintained, when the Savior came with the supplemental law? Had not the Savior, when he proclaimed that supplemental law, declared that its object and essence were "to fulfill—not to destroy?" Did He destroy? Did He rescind the portion of the original law which instituted slavery? No, sir; no! Well enough did the Apostle know that He had not. That His divine lips had been sealed into silence as to an institution which His Father, in His wisdom, had sanctioned, and which He had not, in His eternal council, missioned Him to abrogate. Hence, sir, no hesitation, and no doubt; and under the inspired pen of the Apostle, the duty and the obligation are sheerly defined. "*Slaves*," (I rectify the perversions of King James's translators,) "*slaves—δουλοι—be obedient to them that are your masters; doing the will of God.*"

But this question of slavery, under the dispensation of the Gospel, was one which touched every man at almost every point of his existence. Unlike our pragmatic advisers of the North—whose forefathers, by a decision of their Supreme Court, blundered into an abolition of slavery, and therefore can have but an intrusive concern in this question—the Ephesians had slaves in their midst; and hence their anxiety to reconcile their municipal rights with their religious obligations. But this anxiety was not experienced in Ephesus alone. Wherever slavery was found, and the

master, or the slave, a convert to the new creed, these very questions of faith and scruples of conscience arose. Hence you find the Colossians, to whom the light of the Gospel had been dispensed; who claimed the honor of founding one of the seven primitive churches in Asia; the depositaries of the faith in its earlier purity, also appealing to the Apostle on this all-pervading question of slavery, which touched them in their dearest social and religious interests. As it was settled for the Ephesians, so was it settled for the Colossians. Slaves obey, &c. The mandate is peremptory; it is one of obedience to the master, and it implies his right to enforce it. It settles, therefore, the right of the master in the tenure of the slave, within the limitations which the Apostle assigns, and which the statutes of the land have, in some form, recognized. And here it strikes me that the injunction of the Apostle is, that the slave shall "bide the ordinance of God" in singleness of heart. How long would that condition continue to exist, did those who have taken upon themselves the patronage of the temporal and spiritual welfare of our slaves possess the power and the authority to carry out their very philanthropic schemes? Why, sir, that very "singleness of heart," which is the appanage of our slaves, they madly, ruthlessly, seek to destroy, or pervert into an instrument of baleful malice. They preach rebellion, too, to the slave against the master, whom the law and the will of God have placed over him.

It is well, sir, for the interest as well as the character of the South, that the indefeasible Word of God has spoken a curse on those who preach false gospel, or pervert the precepts of His law. Were any further proof needed of such preaching of the gospel, and such perversion of the law, I know not where it can be looked for in its most conclusive form, save in the epistles of Paul to his favorite disciple. If no other muniment for the rights of the slaveholder but that one could be found in the canon of Scripture, that alone were amply sufficient to fence them against the assaults of either fanatic or hypocrite. There is authority from the Apostle of the Gentiles, which commends itself with irreversible force and power to the honesty of such of our northern friends as are honest in this question of slavery; and that authority speaks unmistakably in his epistles to Timothy. They embrace a variety of instructions furnished to the missionary in his ministry to the Church of Ephesus. Almost every relation of life the Apostle draws within the purview of his sagacious mind, and makes the subject of his pastoral charges to the young Levite. Among them are those against the "men-stealers," and that, northern comity would apply to us; but among them are those also against "liars," and that, I fear, looks unerringly to some of our good brethren of the North; but in the whole compages of those instructions and charges, I find not a single one against slavery. On the contrary, for fear, it would seem, that the epistle which he had addressed directly to his flock at Ephesus should have failed to enlighten their minds and pacify their consciences on the question of slavery, the very first words of the last chapter of the former epistle

show who are the "men-stealers" and who the "liars;" whether we, who hold our slaves under the very tenure of God's will, or they who would lie away the law and the Gospel, which bear witness to that will.

Listen, sir, to the doctrine which the Apostle delivers to Timothy, to teach and proclaim: "Let as many servants (*δούλοι*, slaves) as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and His doctrines be not blasphemed."—(1 Timothy, chap. vi., verse 1.) I do not profess to be much versed in the knowledge of exegesis; but if it could ever easily be applied to the meaning of words, it must surely be in this instance of a text which can leave no loop-hole for either quibble or doubt. The very form of the mandate of the Apostle is one of great peculiarity. He not merely tells the slave, in another place, that the master has a right to his obedience; but he also charges Timothy, his vicar at Ephesus, to teach and proclaim that the master is entitled to honor at the hands of the slave. The very words (*ιδίων δεσποτάς*, their own masters) seem to convey a peculiar import. The slave, as such, is bound to obey him under whose authority he may accidentally be placed. But to his own master, his master whose "perpetual inheritance" he is, he owes the tribute of honor as well as the duty of obedience; and this for the reason assigned by the Apostle, that the master is to be counted worthy of such tribute. Now, sir, I ask, unless words so plainly put together can by any possibility lead the mind astray, whether any man can for a moment reasonably admit that that is abominable, that that is sinful, which the Apostle, speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit, charges his disciple to teach and proclaim as worthy of honor in the master's person? But why should I gloss a text, the words of which speak most eloquently for themselves?

Read the text over, and see whether it be possible for any one to mistake its import and force. The slave, under the yoke of bondage, is bound—not through compulsion, but "in singleness of heart"—to obey his master in the flesh. He is bound not only to obey, but also to honor his master, who is accounted worthy of the honor! And why, sir? Lest a contrary conduct, on the part of the slave, shall do violence to the teachings of the Savior, and blaspheme the name of God! Now, who are the perpetrators of sin, and the workers of iniquity? We, who look to the name of God and to His law, for our rights, and abide by the teachings which the Master taught? Or they, who by insolent repudiations blaspheme His name, and by false assumption, pervert His doctrines? Let the text answer for the South. To those very conscientious deniers of the olden law, who strive to quibble out of its precepts and abjure its institution of slavery, on the plea that it is *effete*, I would commend the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, in which it is written: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."—(Chapter iii., verse 10.) To others, our excellent amenders of the new dispensation, who would foist the sin of slavery in the Gospel-law,

I would equally submit the gentle warnings given to their predecessors, the "foolish Galatians:" "If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed!"

Indeed, sir, I wish our kind friends joy of the pleasant position in which their regard for the welfare, the morality, and the godliness of the South, has placed them before the world. I see them, in the self-seeking of their pride and the perversity of their heart, contrive false and anti-Christian doctrines to delude ignorance and propagate mischief. In their crusade against the slavery institution of the South, I see them, like their compeers, the Galatians, compelled to face the twofold horns of the scriptural dilemma. They would discard, in their call for an "anti-slavery Bible," the dispensation of the old law, which, in the word of God, establishes and sanctions the tenure of slaves as a "perpetual inheritance;" and the tenth verse of the epistle peals into their ears: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." They would supply the silence of the Savior, or interpolate His gospel, when they clamor that it condemns slavery; and the ninth verse of the first chapter of the same epistle again meets them with the threat of God's wrath: "If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed!"

And here, Mr. Chairman, I protest against any misapplication of my remarks, so as to involve in them the whole body of the clergy of the free States. I am free to acknowledge, sir, that they number among their ranks men of whom, either as scholars or divines, any country might justly be proud; men to whose sterling piety and faithful pastorates not even the duty which I owe to a slandered and long-enduring people could induce me to do injustice or to deny the praise. I trust, therefore, that these remarks shall not be misunderstood, as they are not intended for any but those notorious disparagers of sacred functions who draggle the robes of the priesthood in the sloughs of fanatical politics, and pervert the ministrations of their pulpits to dishonor their Master, traduce our people, and convulse our society. To those, sir, I mean my remarks to apply, who are truly the representatives of that dissatisfied, incorrigible race of meddlers which the *Religio Laici* so aptly illustrates: "It is but dubbing themselves the saints of God, which it is the interest of their teachers to tell them they are, and their own interest to believe; and after that, they cannot dip into the Bible but one text or another will turn up for *their* purpose." Ay, sir, this willful perversion, or convenient manipulation, of texts to their purposes, is a not inapposite illustration of the poetical dictum,

"*Cælum non animam mutant qui trans mare eurrunt;*"—a change of climate, but no change of spirit, from good Old England to good New England. With us it seems to have put on all the appearances of a disease of chronic character. The most repulsive of its indications I find in the distortion of the text of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, the only one which they could succeed, by



such distortions, in tinkering into a condemnation of slavery, against the clear precepts of the Mosaic law, and the no less lucid injunctions of the Apostle's charge. This condemnation of slavery, sir, I find our good friends invariably attempting to contrive, by a perversion of the text of the epistle, in the face of the mandate of the law, and of the teachings of the Savior, through the lips of His Apostle. He, sir, was besieged by questions from those "foolish Galatians" of the East, whom I think I have not wronged by a comparison with our "Galatians" of the North. And, sir, with the tartness—nay, with the fierceness—which we know would sometimes stir the great Apostle, he asks them what spirit of evil has drawn them within its influence? and exclaims: "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians, chap. iv., 28.)

Well, sir, what does this mean? And, with its meaning, what does it prove against the direct precepts of the old covenant and the repeated injunction of the new dispensation, both of which recognize the rule of bondage, and settle the relations between the master and the slave? St. Paul, in the act of explaining away the doubts and scruples of his converts, in the sense of the words which he addresses to them, evidently realizes the words of his Divine Master, to show them how noble, liberal, and civilizing are those spiritual doctrines which overstepped the antagonism of races, disregarded the distinctions of political society, and even overlooked the natural differences of sex, to gather every human infirmity to their solace, and call every human condition to their hopes; to raise up every grade of lowliness to the supernal glories of heaven, and to abate into humility every excess of inordinate pride, even into the very abjections of earth. They were doctrines, sir, which tended to dispel every vestige of what had, up to the time when they were proclaimed, been witnessed in the pagan world—a society of incongruent contrasts! A society of Jews, exclusively claiming for themselves the heavenly promises of God! A society of Greeks, who, though monarchs of the intellect, were shut out from the veriest glimpses of true spiritual life! A society with slaves, who, though reduced to their condition of bondage by the imperscrutable decrees of the Almighty mind, who, though bonds of the body, under the law of man and of God, had a soul for the promises and the inheritances of the Word! A society of masters, who, themselves initiated into the revelations and the hopes of that Word, refused the communion of its blessings to the slave! A society of males, who, by virtue of the first disobedience and of the primal fall, wielded over woman the unchecked and irresponsible authority of the household! A society of females, who, secluded from all the concerns of life in atonement for the original agency in that fall, and condemned to social inferiority, groaned in solitude, and obeyed the authority!

If the reading of the declaration of the Apostle be not thus—and it is proved to be so by the whole context of the chapter, which looks to the "sub-

stance of things hoped for" through the workings of the spirit of faith; proved to be so by a chapter in which opposition is set up between the works of the flesh and the influences of the spirit of faith—then would the exegesis of our religious ideologists, and especially of our Yankee theologians, write St. Paul, the eminently practical man and pointedly keen logician, guilty of the veriest of absurd propositions and untenable doctrines. Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female, he knew to be living and substantial entities, which no word of his could speak or explain away. He could not mean that the species Jew, or the species Greek, of the human family, could be fused into something that was neither Greek nor Jew. He knew that the inexorable law of races, if not the living entail of blood, protested against the idea of such a thing. He could not mean that the bond and the free could so cohere as to form a neutral third. He knew that the laws of the Code, the protection of which he himself had once invoked, and the obligations of which he fully understood, repelled the obliteration of the distinction. He did not mean that man and woman could lay down their peculiar characteristics; and realize the impossible androgynous of Plato, for he was no mean adept in the philosophies of the Grecian school; and both the law of creation and the intentions of God forbade the dream. Something firmer and truer, therefore, than any Grecian tenet or Platonic dream, he knew to be in the declaration of the Book, "male and female made he them;" and he equally knew that he had received no authority and no power to undo the work of the Almighty hand. What he meant, and what is evident from the words of his lips, is, that fusion and absorption in Christ, which belongs to a "kingdom not of this earth;" but no change, even the slightest, in the various relations of life, which were sanctioned by the spiritual teachings of his Master, and controlled by the temporal laws under which he lived and taught.

Have I, Mr. Chairman, committed the same wrong with which I charge these traducers of the South? Have I suppressed anything? have I distorted anything? have I misapplied anything, which the law of man, or, higher still, the law of God, has written down in relation to this misunderstood or perverted question of slavery? Have I not, sir, shown that they of the North, who have causelessly taken up this question of slavery—what have they to do, sir, with a sin which does not attach to *their* skirts?—have I not shown, sir, that they cannot make slavery the subject of their denunciations and falsehoods without desecration of the law of God and falsification of the precepts of His Gospel? Under what conditions stand we now under which the same New England has not stood? As ourselves now, New England, the whole of New England, once bought, sold, and held slaves. Having, within the last seventy-five years, had slaves as general adjuncts of their communities, the possession of slaves must have then been deemed no violation of the law of God, which they now charitably impute to the South.

But, sir, from the moment that their slaves were

emancipated, or from the moment when, from what cause soever, they ceased to have any upon whom to exercise the scruples of their conscience or force the blessings of their religion; they dipped into that repository of texts to which Dryden adverts, and they discovered that slavery is a godless abomination and a heinous crime. Having no slaves of their own, they immediately, under the auspices of Old England hypocrites, who boast of no mean representatives in New England, turned to the South to apply their late discovered gospel doctrine of the abomination and sinfulness of slavery. Sir, sir, will these people compel us to believe that they are fools as well as hypocrites?

What! they who were the special saints and agents of God in the motherland; they who, driven away from Old England, through the marshes of Holland, to the eternal Plymouth Rock, to become the saints and agents of God in New England, upon this continent, where, unless I mistake, God had made a lodgment some century before their fathers' ears had been cropped and their fathers' tongues been slit, at the tithings and market-places of the land over the waters, for their headstrong, pragmatic, and meddlesome intrusions, which we of the South are not spared at the hands of their descendants! What! they who claimed to be the depositaries and custodians of both new and old covenant snatched away from the "scarlet woman and the man of sin;" they who claimed to be the saints by excellence, and the expounders, *ex professo*, of the true doctrines of the gospel of Christ; they, with the pretended condemnations of that gospel pressing upon their consciences and their souls, remained with slavery in their midst as a constant, general fact and right recognized by Church and State without their consciousness of its violation of the gospel law with which we of the South are charged, at the eleventh hour, by these godly workers in the vineyard of the Lord! Why, sir, not satisfied with holding and maintaining slavery in their midst, not satisfied with owning slaves themselves—though, with us, they are pleased to call it violation of the law of God—they must even look for accomplices in the violation of that law, and, sending their ships over the oceans, go in quest of slaves, to import them, and to sell them where they were wanted, or where they had not yet been introduced. Would they, Mr. Chairman, have us understand that their fathers, not we, are the "men-stealers" and dealers in human flesh? Or else, would they have us, in order to save the memory of those good, old "Puritan fathers" from the deep damnation of being the original patentees of anti-Christian slavery, believe that those worthies, with all their claims to sanctimonious purity and evangelical grace, were but dolts, who had not yet groped their way over the threshold of the New Jerusalem which their descendants have since reared? That their fathers were as guiltless of knowledge of the Scriptures, especially in regard of slavery, as they themselves are of the precepts of God and the sanctities of truth? Would they have us believe, in one word, that to them, and to their brighter lights, kindled at the shrines of Exeter Hall, was reserved, once for all, the signal privi-

lege of correcting all the unseemly errors of the inconvenient law of God?

Is the South, sir, to be damned into a change of its institutions by virtue of pseudo-Scriptures, edited with notes, and exegeses tacked to them by Yankee exponents of bogus gospel law? Sir, there is a promise of the Master, "My word shall not pass away," which sustains our hopes through all these assaults of prejudice wedded to malevolence. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, I am even now afraid that this malevolence of our slanderers may have compelled me to be, in some measure, unjust to them in the bearing of my remarks. I am afraid, at least, sir, that the persistent calumnies, studiously contrived, and as zealously disseminated against us by our northern friends, may have led me to disparage some of their merits, or to withhold much of the acknowledgment of their deserts. I find, sir, one thing which I had overlooked. Like us, sir, I find that, in one respect at least, they are conscientious observers of the law of God in this question of slavery. That law, Mr. Chairman, if I have read it aright, established two species of servitude—the servitude of the children of Israel, and that of the bondman purchased from the heathens around them. Instead of violating the law, Mr. Chairman, we have adhered to its enactment. We have gone—or rather our more thrifty Yankee brethren have gone for us—to the dark places of this earth—gone to the heathen and inferior races of Africa for our slaves; whilst those who have consented to be "men-stealers" for our uses and our dollars, have also followed, and in their way, the mandate of that law. Some of their menial labor, sir, unless I mistake, is drawn from Israel itself. Their free paupers and vagabonds are, like Joseph, not unfrequently cast "into the pit;" whilst the Simeons, the Zabulons, and the Ashers of goodly New England—our American Israel—show themselves nothing loath to chaffer away their white brethren on time to the "Midianite merchantmen."

I claim, Mr. Chairman, that both South and North are obedient to the law of God. We of the South, sir, derive our slaves from the very regions which the Lord has designed. They of the North have no particular aversion, now and then, to manufacture a few out of their own kindred and blood. But here much of the similitude must cease. You and I, Mr. Chairman, know of more than one instance in which, when freedom had been extended to the slaves as a reward for faithful services, the gift was declined, and the beneficiary preferred to remain in bondage under the roof where he had grown, perchance, with the master and the children around him. Yet I think that you and I, sir, have yet to learn that any of the sold white slaves of the North has ever shown himself so much in love with the "peculiar institution" of that North, as to refuse the boon of freedom when his period of involuntary servitude had expired, much less to offer remaining under the salutary blessings of this Yankee pattern of white, Christian slavery!

Thus, sir, have I traced, and, I think, not unfairly, the law as delivered by the Savior, and as applied by His Apostles. In either form, Mr.



Chairman, it is plain and unmistakable. Into the supposed tendencies of its doctrines it is not my business to inquire, nor yet to look into what channels of action they may have been forced by the errors of human judgment or the warpings of fanatical passions. I am satisfied to take that law as it reads, and to stand by what it allows or forbids in relation to slavery. The Constitution of the United States, sir, by the essence of creation, by its reservation of the rights of the States, recognizes the sovereignty of those States, whilst it discards the idea of a supreme authority. This, sir, is an essence of our organic law. Yet, sir, is there a soundly-thinking statesman but will admit that, by the contrivance of tendencies, by the process of construction, and by the fatality of precedents, it is not rapidly putting on, if it have not already put on, all the substantial forms of a consolidated government? Even so, sir, with the institutes of Christianity. The theory of tendencies has been developed so far beyond the intents of the law-giver that the results of man's speculations have been grafted upon his statute as parts of the law itself. It is under this mania of tendencies, not the spirit of truth, that the modern improvers of a Divine code have, from the height of their perverted pulpits, and from the bosoms of their unholy conventicles, been shrieking their denunciations of slavery as a sin and a curse, laid at the door of the South. The law, sir, as given out by its founder, will hold in the hollow of the hand. Its precepts are written with the perspicuity of the light which blazes on the frontlet of the stars. I read the law, I ponder its precepts, and I find nothing in it against slavery, but what the hands of man would wickedly interpolate under the convenient guise of tendency. The law of God, Mr. Chairman, is an equation, full and complete, made up of the modern dispensation and the old covenant. They are both results of Divine counsels and exponents of Divine truth. You cannot touch any of its elements, you cannot add to or subtract from either of the terms, without vitiating the result. The curse is upon those who would do so. Did

I require any proof of the subsistence of that law and of the verity of the Book in which it is written, I would find it in the character of the awfully terrible language in which the penalties of infraction are written out in every variety of form and for every vicissitude of time. It is not the growth of human thought, nor yet the expression of human speech. It has the unmistakable stamp of Divine conception and Divine utterance. Save where it has pleased the Maker to modify it, it stands as the expression of His unchanged will. It rings, as it has rung through the lapse of ages. It speaks, as it has spoken across the chasms of revolutions, above the tramp of generations steadily treading on their pilgrimage to the grave; it speaks, even now, with the most appalling denunciations which it may be given to the mind of man to conceive. It is useless for our politico-religious theologians to shriek out, "old dispensation and old law; it had its time, and it has passed away for a better and a higher law." What, sir, higher and better law coming from God? This is impious, sir, beyond utterance. This is lending to unerring wisdom the failings and imperfections of the human mind. Man may grope away at higher and better laws; but God intuitively and ever wills the highest and the best.

I admit, sir, the fulfilling law; but I deny, from pole to pole, that that which was fulfilled has passed away! It is still living, and in our midst, touching us at every point of our existence, absorbed through every fiber of your legislations and codes. Some of the minor regulations of the civil and religious law may have been dropped—some ritual ceremonies and external forms, adapted to other purposes, may have lapsed with the changes of circumstances and of time; but the law which, deny it as they may, contains the recognition of slavery, and, therefore, the rights of the South, is a living, binding law. It is the handbook of our duties and the sun of our hopes; it is the moral law which the Savior has perfected; and that cannot pass away, because the moral law, like God Himself, is an eternal essence!













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